



SAFEGUARD YOUNG
PEOPLE PROGRAMME
ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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ACRONYMS

CARMMA	Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
ESARO	East and Southern Africa Regional Office (UNFPA)
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
EUP	Early and unintended pregnancies
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SYP	Safeguard Young People
YAP	Youth Advisory Panel
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

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MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR

The Safeguard Young People (SYP) programme has been at the forefront of promoting adolescent and young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights in East and Southern Africa since its inception in 2013.

The past nine years have seen great strides but also immense challenges as the recent COVID-19 pandemic upended the lives of adolescents and young people. However, we were able to recover from the impact of this global crisis and the SYP programme made significant progress in 2022, placing youth participation, leadership and accountability, bodily autonomy, and ground-breaking innovations at the centre of action in the region.

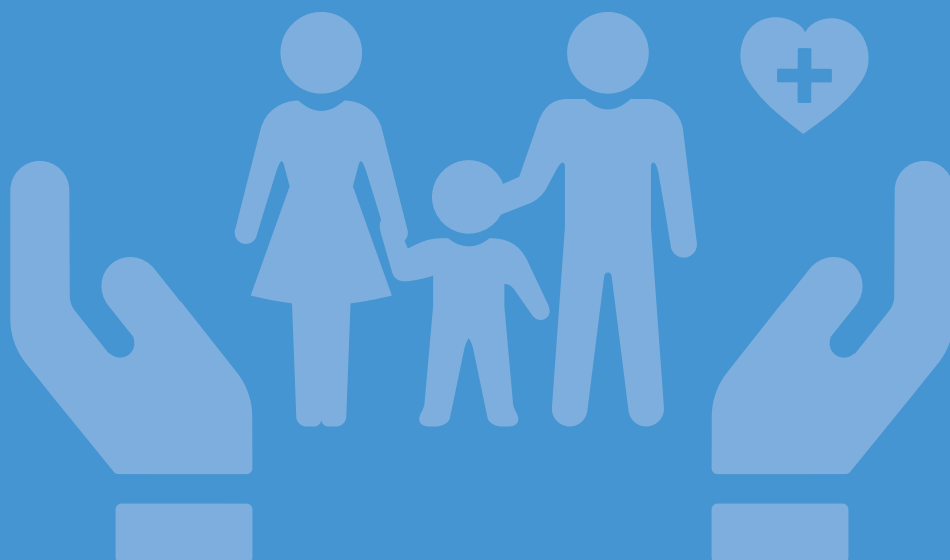
Empowering adolescents and young people to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections including HIV, early and unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions and child marriage has been our focus from the beginning. This continues today as we build on the successes and lessons learned from the previous phases of the SYP programme.

The UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) and country offices in 12 SYP countries, together with the Southern Africa Development Community, the East Africa Community, the Swiss

Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, have worked tirelessly to end gender-based violence and harmful cultural practices and promote gender equitable norms and protective behavior with the collaboration and guidance of national governments and civil society organizations.

To address the current trends; the SYP programme has also diversified its work to include climate change adaptation strategies, menstrual health, tech-based innovation and integration of adolescent sexual and reproductive health in economic empowerment initiatives, among others. The achievements made by SYP in 2022 demonstrate the continued commitment of UNFPA and its partners to create an enabling legal and policy environment in East and Southern Africa and empower adolescents and young people to lead healthy lives while being able to access inclusive, resilient, adolescent ,and youth-responsive health systems.

Lydia Zigomo
UNFPA Regional Director
East and Southern africa



SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE IN EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

The SYP programme is a flagship initiative by the UNFPA ESARO that empowers adolescents and young people between the ages of 10 to 24 to protect themselves from sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV, early and unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortion, early marriage, gender-based violence, and other harmful cultural practices. This is achieved through three key outcomes:

1. **A strengthened enabling environment to promote and protect adolescents and young people's rights;**
2. **Strengthened demand for integrated sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, and HIV information and services through youth empowerment; and**
3. **Increased equitable access to quality integrated sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence and HIV services, which are adolescent and youth-friendly.**

Launched in 2013, the SYP programme now covers 12 countries in East and Southern Africa – Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.



Photo credit: UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office

CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Inclusive policies, laws, and accountability mechanisms are the backbone of promoting and protecting adolescent and young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights in countries and the region.

Snapshot of SYP-supported results in 2022

12 countries against a target of **10** used regional frameworks to **improve the legal and policy environment** for adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights – up from **8** in 2021.

The targeted **11** countries established accountability frameworks to **protect adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights** – up from **8** in 2021.

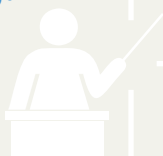


10 countries against a target of **11** mainstreamed menstrual health management into adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights policies – up from **7** in 2021.



3,250 youth network members were **trained in advocacy** for sexual and reproductive health and rights and youth development – up from 1,100 in 2021. This achievement was **against** the **2022 target** of **2,145**.

11 out of the **12** targeted countries documented **policy dialogues on climate change and adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights**, sexual and reproductive health needs of boys and young men, and adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights in the context of **universal health coverage** – up from **6** in 2021.



All the **12** countries established **platforms for strategic information** disseminated – up from **9** in 2021.

45 knowledge management products were produced through **regional publications, research studies and documentation** of best practices, exceeding the target of **15** for the year.



REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

In 2022, the SYP programme:

- Worked closely with the **African Union Commission to develop the African Union strategy on education for the health and well-being of young people**, which will help to improve reproductive, mental, and physical health of children and young people while contributing to the achievement of educational goals.
- Helped develop and launch the **Africa Humanitarian Strategy** and supported **youth convening** as part of the African Union Humanitarian Summit to ensure the engagement of youth leaders and their constituencies in the processes and outcomes of the summit.
- Partnered with the African Union Commission's youth division to support the **1 Million Next Level Initiative**. The initiative aims to reach 300 million young people by 2030 with opportunities in education, employment, entrepreneurship, engagement and health and well-being as targeted efforts to unleash the potential of youth across Africa.
- Supported finalizing the Southern African Development Community (SADC) **Youth Empowerment Policy Framework and Accountability Framework**. The framework addresses youth development and empowerment from a multi-sectoral perspective and creates opportunities for harnessing the potential of youth in development.
- Helped develop the **SADC Youth Protocol**, a strategic regional cooperation framework to harmonize youth policies, strategies, action plans, regulations, and activities and ensure a multi-sectoral approach to youth development and increased investments in young people, including in their sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Youth Protocol is a binding document for all SADC Member States.
- Supported the dissemination of the **SADC Model Law on Gender-Based Violence**, which assists countries to integrate best practices on gender-based violence prevention and response in their national gender-based violence laws, encourages national legislatures to enact gender-based violence laws where these do not exist, and reinforces a common regional approach in dealing with laws, measures, and strategies to help eliminate gender-based violence.
- Continued supporting the **East and Southern Africa Commitment on health and education for the well-being of adolescents and young people**. This engagement saw UNFPA assist in developing and validating the East and Southern Africa Commitment Results Accountability Framework and host a meeting, together with the Regional Technical Coordinating Group, which UNFPA co-chairs with UNESCO, in May 2022, to agree on the way forward for Kenya, Uganda and Burundi that had not yet endorsed the commitment at that time.
- Contributed to a UNAIDS-led regional scoping study to better position the **Education Plus Initiative** in the region. The initiative is a high-profile political advocacy drive to accelerate action and investment in HIV prevention by empowering adolescent girls and young women. A Nerve Centre – made up of young female leaders from across the region who act as advocates for the Education Plus Initiative – was established.

EVIDENCE GENERATION IN 2022

- The study on the **impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights** revealed an increase in teenage pregnancy, child marriage, unsafe abortion, gender-based violence and school dropout and a decrease in access to sexual and reproductive health services, including HIV testing, and widespread economic strain for adolescents and young people in the East and Southern African region.
- A **mapping of already existing models on self-care** was conducted, helping to identify best practices and lessons learnt applicable to the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and young people in East and Southern Africa and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa.
- The **Youth Status Report** and country profiles and sub-analysis provided updated information on the status of adolescents and youth in the region, particularly looking at adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights. The report with regional averages and country chapters will be a reference document for the UNFPA ESARO, country offices and all the SYP partners to guide advocacy and programming.
- The **scoping study on professionalization of youth work** revealed that there is limited knowledge of the progress made in the professionalization of youth work and more attention is needed to develop youth work.
- The **technical brief on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights and mental health** presented emerging practices that are effective in preventing and responding to mental health and sexual and reproductive health in an integrated manner.

MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

UNFPA ESARO supported the 4th African Youth Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in March 2022. Attended by more than 250 in-person and 5,000 virtual participants, the summit created a multi-stakeholder space to learn, share and assess youth-driven emerging solutions, existing potential challenges, and opportunities for youth resilience to recover from the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic, and accelerate youth actions to achieve SDGs without leaving no one behind. During the summit, UNFPA hosted sessions on meaningful youth engagement, comprehensive sexuality education, disability and participated in a panel discussion on climate adaptation strategies.

MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The SYP regional team and the UNFPA Geneva Office hosted a panel discussion on the human-rights- based approach to menstrual health and hygiene, as well as a networking event, during the Human Rights Council 50th session in June. The UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Natalia Kanem, was the keynote speaker for the official session and delivered a speech that highlighted the link between menstrual health and sexual and reproductive health and rights. This engagement was extremely important in acknowledging that menstrual health is not merely a water and sanitation issue but is also an issue of dignity and rights. The Office of the Human Rights Commissioner included in the proceedings report that menstrual health is an enabler for the realization of human rights and is part of sexual and reproductive health and rights. This opens the possibility in 2023 for a new and more comprehensive Human Rights Council resolution on menstrual health.

YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY

A capacity-building workshop on youth, peace and security, organized by the SYP programme and the Office of the Special Envoy to the Great Lakes in collaboration with the Executive Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Youth for Peace (Y4P) Africa Programme in November 2022, mobilized young peacebuilders in the Great Lakes Region to explore their potential and assess the bottlenecks facing youth-led peacebuilding initiatives. By analyzing the systematic and structural barriers, and local mechanisms and capacities, the workshop promoted the role of young people in sustaining peace at national peace processes and also at the community level. During the workshop, the delegates reviewed and endorsed the Strategic Plan of the Regional ICGLR Youth Fora (2023 to 2027), the operationalization plan and the two-year action plan, which is financially and technically supported by UNFPA ESARO under the auspices of SYP.



Photo credit: UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office

ENHANCING PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION IN RWANDA

Under the theme of ‘Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a World for All Ages’, dialogues were held in Rwanda between adults and young people to enhance parent-child communication.

Parents were reminded that it is their responsibility to provide their children with the right information on sexual and reproductive health from a young age and to create an environment where children are free to talk and ask questions.

“When it comes to sexual and reproductive health and rights, there is a big intergenerational gap: from different cultural norms, barriers to youth-friendly health services, to a missing communication within different generations on sexual and reproductive health. We must collaborate to foster successful and equitable intergenerational relations and partnerships to ensure leaving no one behind,” says Therese Karugwiza, Adolescent and Youth Unit Leader, UNFPA.

Adolescents and parents both benefit when parent-child communication about sexuality is open and honest. These benefits extend beyond the family environment to the community as a whole by providing for healthier, more stable family units and individuals.

“Sexual and reproductive health is not only the responsibility of youth, it is mainly the responsibility of a parent to give the right information to their children. If you don’t, they will get information from other sources like social media, that cannot be trusted. Us, parents, are the best source,” said Mukankusi Athanasie, the Vice Mayor in charge of social affairs in Nyamasheke District.

She also mentioned the importance of fathers in providing information to not only young girls but also boys.

“Fathers need to take responsibility and share information with their sons and daughters. Your sons need to know their bodies too, they need the right sexual and reproductive health information, and it is your responsibility to provide that,” she added.

Young people need to be empowered with knowledge and discussions with parents and other knowledgeable adults help to counteract myths and misinformation about sex and put young people on the right track.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Angola



A total of 160 peer educators from civil society organizations in Luanda, Huíla, Namibe, Cuando Cubango and Cunene provinces were trained to support adolescents and youth in advocating and participating in decision-making processes, reaching 8,856 adolescents and youth were reached with key messages.

Botswana



Eight out of 10 members of the network of young people with disabilities were trained on leadership skills such as problem-solving and advocacy to engage in policy dialogues on sexual and reproductive health and rights. As part of the training, a tailor-made CONDOMIZE campaign was launched for young people with disabilities for the first time.

Eswatini



The National Menstrual Health Guidelines were disseminated to almost all healthcare facilities. More than 450 health care workers were oriented on the guidelines. Various civil organizations are calling for tax-free menstrual health commodities and products.

Lesotho



Thirty-five media houses were trained on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights to ensure accurate reporting on comprehensive sexuality education and dispel misconceptions.

Malawi



Youth networks were supported to conduct community dialogues on teenage pregnancy, contraceptives and child marriage in Nkhatabay and Dedza. Ten community dialogue sessions targeting mother groups, chiefs, traditional leaders and faith leaders reached 2,545 young women and men. Of these, 492 were youth with disabilities.

Mozambique



Information and sensitization activities on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights by youth organizations, an NGO and a community-based organization in Nampula province benefited 4,225 young people with mentoring. Twenty-two per cent of the 4,225 boys and girls were referred to protection services where they sought help, accessed family planning and other HIV services. In addition, 2,852 women and girls in Nampula city were reached with community provision of family planning services through mobile brigades.

Namibia



More than 500 young people were reached with various platforms with sessions to popularize the recently launched 3rd National Youth Policy. The process of developing a Youth Policy is as important as the process of popularizing it and making sure that young people are aware of its provisions.

Rwanda



A total of 150 community leaders, parents and youth participated in intergenerational dialogues in four districts. Parents and opinion leaders committed to improve communication with young people and vice versa, to help improve young people's mental health and promote healthy behaviours. Interface meetings with young people were also held and participants were trained on adolescent sexual and reproductive health, including climate change.

Zambia



Thirty parliamentarians reviewed policy and legislative barriers that inhibit adolescents from accessing services and information, which culminated in a communiqué by the parliamentarians supporting free access to adolescent sexual and reproductive health services and information through comprehensive sexuality education.

South Africa



The National Department of Social Development and the SYP programme implemented the comprehensive sexuality education training manual for out-of-school youth, including a module on climate change in a targeted district in Limpopo Province. Sixty peer educators from youth networks were capacitated as master trainers on comprehensive sexuality education for out-of-school youth and will cascade the training through their peer education activities and report on reach to the department.

Zimbabwe



In Hopley, a peri-urban settlement outside Harare, a Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) was established and 13 YAP members were introduced to key partners to ensure that they are part and parcel of any youth programming implemented in the district. YAP members were also trained on sexual and reproductive health and rights, leadership and advocacy. The YAP members and peer facilitators contributed to the amendment of the Medical Service Bill.

Tanzania



In strengthening the functions of the AfriYAN Tanzania chapter, an additional 30 youth-led organizations from SYP regions were recruited and oriented on leadership and advocacy. The recruitment and capacity building of the AfriYAN members provides an avenue for effective participation of youth networks in international, regional, and national decision making and accountability platforms.

EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

When adolescents and young people are empowered with knowledge, skills and the agency to make informed and positive decisions about their bodies and lives, as well as demand access to sexual and reproductive health services, they are a force for a better world.

Snapshot of SYP-supported results in 2022

All the **12 countries** now have inclusive and quality comprehensive sexuality education institutionalized in **pre-service teacher training** – up from **5** in 2021.

11 out of the **12** countries have inclusive and quality comprehensive sexuality education in **out-of-school programmes** and/or **strategies** – up from **8** in 2021.

9 out of the **10** targeted countries have inclusive and quality comprehensive sexuality education modules institutionalized in **tertiary institutions** – up from **5** in 2021.

62,037 out of the targeted **65,458** primary and secondary schools provided **life skills-based HIV and sexuality education** – up from **10,711** in 2021

15.7 million learners were reached with comprehensive sexuality lessons in schools against a target of **15 million**. This result was up from **5 million** in 2021.

11.9 million against a target of **4.16 million** young people were reached with social and behaviour change communication programmes – up from **3.6 million** in 2021.

162,127 out-of-school girls and boys were **educated** – via **social media, radio and television** – on how to respond to the effects of climate change and environment and disaster risks on sexual and reproductive health and rights exceeding the **target of 53,250**.

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

In 2022, the SYP programme:

- Launched a 13-episode regional 'Let's Talk EUP' radio drama series in April. The 'Let's Talk EUP' campaign was launched in 2019 to **amplify messages on early and unintended pregnancies** at regional level and at grassroots level in 21 countries East and Southern Africa. The radio drama series is available in English, French, Portuguese and Swahili.
- Partnered with MTV Staying Alive Foundation and Meta to produce the docuseries, 'What Makes a Man', which premiered on MTV Base in March. The series **changes the narrative around gender-based violence** and reflects critically on masculinities in South Africa and beyond. It is a platform where young people can become staunch advocates in creating a region with zero gender-based violence.

EUP HACKLAB

The UNFPA ESARO Innovation EUP HackLab mobilized innovative solutions to accelerate collective efforts in ending early and unintended pregnancies across East and Southern Africa. Through an open call, 80 submissions from 10 countries were received. Six solutions were selected for the final pitching event held at the Youth Connekt Africa Summit in Kigali, Rwanda. The two winning solutions were, **1) FemConnect**, which provides access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive telehealth services, period poverty support, and feminine hygiene products for women in sub-Saharan Africa, and **2) InspireLearn mobile learning platform** from Malawi, a simple, offline and affordable tool containing educational content and an audio library in both English and Chichewa. Accessible on feature phones, the platform grants users access to notes, audio and videos for school subjects.

- Started an **Artificial Intelligence (AI) pilot called iSay** that uses machine learning and natural language processing to provide access to real-time information on dialogues, social media behaviour, and reactions to programme interventions by UNFPA and other development partners in adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights. The pilot was presented at a global UNFPA webinar on the role of AI in achieving good health and well-being.
- Strengthened advocacy for adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights through an online campaign to **promote the TuneMe App**, which was developed in 2021 to complement the Tune Me mobisite. TuneMe reaches young people online with information on sexual and reproductive health and rights and through the 'service finder' option that links them to service providers in close proximity. More than 900,000 people visited the mobisite in 2022 and the app was downloaded 1,772 times.
- Commemorated the **Day of the African Child** by co-producing and launching, together with Y-ACT and UNFPA ESARO, a digital campaign on the severe impact of harmful practices on young women and girls. The campaign showcased support to survivors, keeping girls in school and creating a favorable legal and policy environment for young women and girls.
- Provided **capacity building on comprehensive sexuality education** for the 12 SYP countries, including on engaging young people living with disabilities and those living with HIV, and mitigating opposition to comprehensive sexuality education.
- Overhauled the original iCAN facilitator's manual and developed a new accompanying technical and programmatic guidance that will help **customize comprehensive sexuality education lesson plans for the specific needs of young people living with HIV**.
- Carried out a regional training programme in partnership with the South African Medical Research Council on the joint 'Breaking the Silence' **comprehensive sexuality approach for young people with disabilities** for Ministry of Education officials from Botswana, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

- Supported a scoping study with Equality Now and SADC Parliamentarians' Forum to track the **implementation of the SADC Model Law on ending child marriage** in the region. The findings, which were presented to the SADC Parliamentarians' Forum and the Regional Model Laws Oversight Committee, clearly showed that capacity building interventions are required to ensure domestication and implementation of the model laws.
- Convened, in partnership with the Asian and Pacific Parliamentarians Forum on Population and Development, the first in a series of webinars under the theme, 'The **role of Parliamentarians** on tracking progress towards the ICPD@25 Commitments in East and Southern Africa'.
- Supported the **integration of menstrual health within sexual and reproductive health and rights policy and programmes** through webinars on technical guidance for national monitoring of indicators on girl's menstrual health and on menstrual health, education and economic progress, as well as a digital campaign to raise awareness of integrating menstrual health within wider policies and programmes among policy makers, technocrats and community members across Africa.
- Developed animated tutorials to enhance the dissemination of the key insights from the **programmatic guidance on integrating adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights and youth people's economic empowerment** in East and Southern Africa, which was developed in 2021 in collaboration with the International Labour Organization and the World Bank.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADOLESCENT SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

As part of the SYP programme's work to empower young people around the impact of climate change on sexual and reproductive health, a first of its kind, evidence-informed stand-alone module called 'Resilient Futures: Young People, the Climate Crisis and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights' was finalized with Queen Mary University. It was piloted online with facilitators from seven SYP countries and young people in Namibia in 2021 with advanced piloting in South Africa in 2022.

The module is part of the wider comprehensive sexuality education offerings for young people in and outside school settings. Young people learn some of the impacts of climate change on their rights, health and well-being, with emphasis on women and girls, and inspire them to individually or collectively lead in taking local action towards climate justice.

The module has been well received by those exposed to it and is accompanied by a promotional video, an animated video that summarizes the key messages within the module, and teaching aids for the facilitator.

The SYP programme also partnered with young people to support several climate change interventions in 2022. These included:

- National and regional consultations led by youth activists ahead of the 66th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which focused on climate change and gender equality.
- Six youth activists engaged in reviewing Nationally Determined Contributions and validating the findings through a youth lens across UNFPA regions.
- Facilitation of youth engagement at COP27 through 10 side events where youth delegates engaged with decision makers.
- Support to the organization of the Humanitarian Summit, which helped to shape the Youth Summit led by International Federation of Red Cross on young Africans as agents of change for climate, disasters, and displacement.

DEFYING THE ODDS IN MALAWI

Ishmael Phiri grew up in Salima district in Malawi during an era where HIV and AIDS were treated as a death sentence. As a result, stigma and discrimination against people living with the virus was rife. Like any other young person, Ishmael knew about the disease from school lessons and the radio.

However, he thought the disease was only for grown-ups. One day, as Ishmael was preparing to sit for his primary school leaving certificate, he suddenly got ill. Her mother took her to the hospital for treatment. The medical staff took his blood sample.

After what seemed like an eternity, his mother took him aside and told him everything. Ishmael was born with HIV and the results showed that his CD4 count was very low.

"The news hit me hard," said Ishmael. "Although I went through some counselling sessions afterwards, I had lost hope. I, however, wrote my examinations and passed," he said.

Ishmael enrolled at day school where he did his secondary education. Although he started coming to terms with his positive status, he didn't trust anyone lest they found out about his status.

After finishing his secondary school, which he passed, Ishmael stayed home for four years, doing nothing. One day, Ishmael decided to visit their local youth-friendly health centre to pass time. When he arrived, he joined a group of young people who were learning about comprehensive sexuality education, supported by UNFPA.

"This session changed my life forever," he said. "When I was listening to the facilitator, it seemed like he was talking directly to me. The most important topic was on HIV. Everything rang true. It was like I was being born again!"

After the session, he went home a changed person, and soon after enrolled for a diploma in HIV and AIDS Management. He explained that, as a person living with the virus, he needed to understand it better, so that he can help fellow young people who are also HIV positive (+Y).

After his studies, he trained as an out-of-school comprehensive sexuality education facilitator supported by UNFPA under the SYP programme. Due to his outstanding performance as a facilitator, UNFPA also trained Ishmael and several other young people in the iCAN package, a comprehensive life skills package for young people living with HIV and their circles of care.

"Although there is growing awareness that the needs of +Y have been overlooked, we have to move from talk to action," said Ishmael, who has been accepted to study a degree in social work. "I dream of a day when +Y will stand in a group and openly share their status without facing a backlash of stigma and discrimination."



Photo credit: UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Angola



School councils, parents, and students in 40 schools were reached by educational sessions on comprehensive sexuality education and teenage pregnancy, including actions aimed at achieving 'zero pregnancy' in schools.

Botswana



Close to 205,000 adolescent girls and boys in primary schools and more 177,000 adolescents and young people in secondary schools in 273 schools were reached by comprehensive sexuality education, which is embedded in the Ministry of Education-led national life skills programme.

Eswatini



A parent-child communication programme reached 441 participants in Ntontozi and Khalanglile, areas with high rates of teenage pregnancy. This initiative supports families to improve communication on healthy and respectful relationships, help-seeking, life skills, decision-making, health, and behaviour within the family environment.

Lesotho



The herd boys programme in Quthing trained 350 adolescent boys and young men on sexual and reproductive health and rights, comprehensive sexuality education and gender-based violence prevention. The SYP programme also continued to popularise the Tune Me platform, reaching 145,000 young people with information on how to improve their sexual and reproductive health.

Malawi



A campaign on reducing early and unintended pregnancies, conducted in partnership with the Malawi Girl Guides Association reached 41,715 young people. Support was also provided to popularize the Tune Me app in Malawi during the launch of the music album by Pikxy, a well-known artist, which reached 785 young people and 445 new page likes.

Mozambique



Tailored social behavior change communication interventions where young women are trained to mentor girls and help increase adolescents and young people's demand for integrated sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence and HIV information and services, 5,605 girls aged 10 to 24 years, including 1,009 girls who were able to access to sexual and reproductive health services in health units.

Namibia



Over 300 pre-service teachers were trained on comprehensive sexuality education using both face-face and online modalities. Namibia also offers comprehensive sexuality education lessons in its life skills curriculum for grades 4 to 12 in all schools, reaching more than 500,000 pupils.

Rwanda



The SYP programme reached 426,000 adolescents and young people through awareness-raising activities, resulting in increased referrals to health centers for youth-friendly services, higher school re-enrolment, reduced incidents of gender-based violence, and improved interpersonal relations between parents and their children.

South Africa



Innovative social and behaviour change communications approaches and platforms reached 383,483 adolescents and young people through social media platforms. In addition, to mark the 2022 Menstrual Hygiene Day, a series of televised dialogues were hosted on the theme of 'making menstruation a normal fact of life by 2030'.

Tanzania



To support young people in informed decision making about their bodies and lives, UNFPA and Prime Minister's Office – Labour, Youth, Employment and Persons with Disability finalized the national life skills training guide and manual for out-of-school youth while the second draft of the national life skills Education framework for out-of-school youth was developed and will be finalized in 2023 after translation into Kiswahili.

Zambia



The SYP programme was instrumental in helping institutionalize comprehensive sexuality education in government systems. Despite Zambia witnessing a fierce backlash against comprehensive sexuality education, the investments of the SYP programme in galvanizing state actors culminated in an executive statement to sustain the provision of comprehensive sexuality education as embedded in the country's 2017 Education Syllabi Framework.

Zimbabwe



Radio sessions on life skills, sexuality, and HIV continued in 2022, with 54 radio sessions aired on four different radio stations reaching around 1.5 million learners. In addition, 10,971 out-of-school youths were educated, including through social media, on how to respond to the impact of climate change, environment, and disaster risks on well-being, sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, and HIV.

PROVIDING ACCESS TO ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH-FRIENDLY SERVICES

Robust national systems are needed to expand and deliver quality integrated sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence and HIV services that are sustainable and adolescent and youth friendly.

Snapshot of SYP-supported results in 2022

1.62 million against a target of **1.76 million** adolescents and young people **were reached** with integrated sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, and HIV services – up from **1.06 million** in 2021.



Close to **3,500** pre-service and in-service providers were trained in **quality adolescent and youth-friendly health service** provision – up from **2,117** in 2021. This exceeded the target of **3,142**.



1,058 health service delivery points offered a **standard package** of adolescent and youth-friendly health services – up from **830** in 2021. This exceeded the target of **1,036**.



11 countries reported **stronger** condom programming for young people and **53.1 million** condoms were distributed against a target of **56.9** million.



REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

In 2022, the SYP programme:

- Helped advocate for the **expansion of the African Union Commission's Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA) to include adolescent sexual and reproductive health**. The expanded CARMMA Plus will optimize the use of social media to highlight the focus on sexual, reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent health. UNFPA is a key partner of the CARMMA Plus and is supporting its rollout.
- Supported **10 country rapid assessments on sexual and reproductive health in universal health coverage** in Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, South Sudan, Uganda and Zambia. The findings of these assessments were used to generate evidence-based actions to situate comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, including adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, in universal health coverage benefit packages, and financing and financial risk protection mechanisms.

CREATING POSITIVE AND SAFE SPACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL IN ZAMBIA

In a classroom filled with eager learners, a teacher writes on the chalkboard in preparation for her lesson on pregnancy. She is teaching this subject as part of the science curriculum at a primary school in Kapiri Mposhi, Zambia.

"If you look at this, which subject are we talking about here?" the teacher prompts as she points at the word 'pregnancy' scrawled on the chalkboard.

"Science!" the students chorus.

During a two-day field visit to Zambia, the SYP programme, alongside partners Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands (EKN), observed dedicated teachers, principals, health-care workers, peer educators and district officials in districts where SYP has been implemented.

The programme has provided a conducive environment for young people to access information and youth-friendly health services.

"The programme has provided a conducive environment for young people to access information and youth-friendly health services, through a combination of education and health care. This is one of the unique strengths of the programme," said Dr. Alexander Kawimbe, Central Province Acting Provincial Health Director. He was speaking on the integrated intervention, from both the health and education sectors, to ensure that young people are reached effectively with information and services.

At the heart of this visit were the teenage girls and boys who participate in the age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education classes and after-school clubs. They are equipped with timely information and skills to make knowledgeable choices about their body and their future. The schools and the health facilities work hand in hand to ensure their health and well-being.

Adolescents and young people are able to access youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health and rights services at the local health facilities. A referral system between the schools and the health facilities has been established, making sure that young people's needs in this respect are met.

"The field visit provided an overall positive impression of the SYP programme implementation in Zambia. There is evidence of an increase in knowledge and skills, such as assertiveness among the young people," said Lawrence Lewis, SDC Senior Regional Programme Officer HIV/AIDS and Gender Focal Point.

In 2021, through SYP, the CONDOMIZE! and YoungSmartFree campaigns distributed more than 580,000 condoms and reached 229,000 young people with information on sexual and reproductive health in Zambia. Over the past nine years, with committed funding from SDC and EKN, the SYP programme has made significant strides in empowering adolescents and youth in Zambia, and across seven other countries in Southern Africa. With the programme's recent expansion to Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania and Rwanda, UNFPA is working to fulfill its vision of an East and Southern Africa free from sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, teen pregnancy, child marriage and sexual violence.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Angola



23 health units in 20 municipalities were supported to implement youth-friendly health services and 134 health providers were trained on sexual and reproductive health and provision of youth-friendly health services using the standard package of services.

Botswana



The implementation of youth-friendly health service standards resulted, over the years, in 35 stand-alone facilities offering youth-friendly health services across the country. Around 171,000 condoms have been distributed in implementation sites.

Eswatini



More than 530 frontline health care workers were trained on adolescent and youth-friendly health service provision in the Shiselweni, reaching 88 per cent of health facilities in the region.

Lesotho



The SYP programme reached 71,556 adolescents and young people with HIV testing services. A total of 90,232 condoms were distributed, 82 health-care workers were trained on adolescent and youth-friendly health services delivery and the clinical management of gender-based violence, and 194,118 adolescents and young people were able to access sexual and reproductive health services.

Malawi



Youth-friendly health services were conducted in health facilities reaching nearly 600,000 young people. The services included emergency pills, condoms, information and counseling, HIV testing and counselling, family planning, screening for gender-based violence, and treatment and management of sexually transmitted infections.

Mozambique



Adolescent and youth-friendly health services were established in four districts while 25 nurses and other participants were trained on contraceptives and commodities management took place in Nampula.

Namibia



Condomize campaigns were combined with a mobile clinic offering HIV testing and other adolescent and youth-friendly health services, reaching 5,000 young people. Over 40,000 condoms were distributed during the campaigns.

Rwanda



A total of 186 health-care providers were capacitated to deliver quality integrated adolescent and young people sexual and reproductive health services and information. In addition, more than 2.6 million condoms were distributed to young people under the age of 25.

South Africa



The SYP supported 73 health facilities in Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Limpopo provinces to deliver integrated sexual and reproductive, HIV, gender-based violence, and adolescent and youth-friendly health services.

Zambia



A total of 62,296 adolescents and young people accessed adolescent sexual and reproductive health and HIV services through community-level services and supported adolescent and youth-friendly health facilities.

Tanzania



A total of 145 peer educators were trained on sexual and reproductive, gender-based violence, and family planning services.

Zimbabwe



A total of 416 health service delivery points were able to offer standard packages of adolescent and youth-friendly health services in the 22 SYP districts. Outreach camps with services for adolescents and young people in three districts reached 125,457 new adolescents and young people with contraceptives while 100,169 young people accessed HIV services.



Photo credit: UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office



LOOKING FORWARD

In 2022, the SYP programme achieved impressive results, helping protect the rights of adolescents and young people, advance healthy choices, and empower young people. Critical emerging issues were addressed, including mainstreaming sexual and reproductive health and rights in existing economic empowerment programmes, climate change adaptation, menstrual health, universal health coverage and sexual and reproductive health and rights for young people with disabilities. The four new countries that joined SYP in 2021 – Angola, Mozambique, Rwanda and Tanzania – have benefited immensely from the SYP programme’s nine years of experience and success as evidenced by their progress this year.

Moving forward, engagement and advocacy at the highest political level for the East and Southern Africa Commitment in countries that have not yet adopted it and for those that have, will continue to be a priority in the face of opposition to comprehensive sexuality education in the region. In addition, given that not all countries are progressing in the same way, the regional SYP team will critically assess each country’s progress and develop dedicated strategies of support to facilitate acceleration of action.

The SYP programme is also entering its final exit phase, which will be co-funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The focus of the exit phase will be on sustaining interventions in the region and focus countries while addressing ‘unfinished business’ by institutionalizing key components of the programme such adolescent sexual and reproductive self-care models within a resilient health system, integrating mental health in adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, climate change adaptation strategies, and economic empowerment within regional and country-level policy, planning, financing, delivery and accountability systems. Together, the intervention package will build the ‘legacy of SYP’ and handover key elements of the SYP to the relevant regional and national institutions.



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